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| The Olympic Park, Hackney Wick and Fish Island | | |
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The Olympic Park, Hackney Wick and Fish Island

Start: Stratford Station

Finish: Stratford Station

Length: 8.5 km/5.3 mi or 9.3 km/5.8 mi

Time: 2 ¼ hours or 2 ½ hours

Transport: Stratford Station is served by Main Line Services from Liverpool Street, by the DLR and by the Central and Jubilee Lines, and is also a terminus for the Overground to Richmond via Highbury & Islington.

Walk Notes:

This walk follows a meandering route through Stratford City, a development preceding the idea of London applying to hold the Olympic Games, and including the very large Westfield Shopping Centre, as well as through the neighbouring Olympic Park and past its surviving Olympic venues, one of the largest urban parks created in Western Europe for more than 150 years, and designed to enrich and preserve the local environment, by restoring wetland habitats and planting native species of plants along the River Lea and the Bow Backwaters. It is still a work in progress, in its continued transition from sports venue to public park, with many new neighbourhoods and amenities added since the 2012 Games.

This is combined with a detour through parts of the adjacent former industrial areas now famous for artists' spaces and independent micro-businesses, but undergoing speedy regeneration: Hackney Wick (South) and Fish Island. These areas are still noticeably shaped by their former mix of (often polluting) industries in this complicated space, dominated by railways, canals, locks, river arms, channels and flood plains.

In the park itself there are lots of changes of level to introduce the many diverse areas: in the South Park the feel is quite urban, as you are surrounded by sport events' structures, lots of trees and wide promenades, all landscaped to look quite formal, almost Continental; while the North Park is wilder, landscaped to look – within the limits of the site – like an English Country Park, including some wetlands, meadows, ponds and flood plains, all designed to create a haven for plants and wildlife. Generally, plantings are deliberately left semi-wild/informal for cost and aesthetic reasons. In total there are 6.5 km of waterways in the park, most of which are walked along or crossed at least once. This is also the first Olympic Park to integrate artworks into the landscape right from the start, and the route passes some of the 28 permanent ones.

The stretch through Hackney Wick and Fish Island exposes the contrast of corporate and alternative visions of how the area should develop. Hackney Wick, where plastics were invented, the term petrol was coined, dry cleaning was introduced to Britain, all due to the vicinity of efficient waterways and railways, where the former high rise Trowbridge Estate has long been blown up to make way for the current crop of artists and independent businesses, who are a world apart from the original indigenous population and Fish Island, where more of the former industrial premises have already been transformed to apartment buildings.

For shorter walk, start from Stratford International Mainline or DLR Stations, passed after 750m.

For a much shorter walk, Hackney Wick Overground Station is passed after 5.5 km/3.4 mi.

For a southerly extension follow the Greenway on top the Northern Outfall Sewer.

Refreshments (details last updated 15/08/2023)

Ginger & Mint 13-14 Victory Parade, East Village, London E20 1FS (020 8001 9533, <http://www.gingerandmint.co.uk/>).

Hand 10-11 Victory Parade, East Village, London E20 1FS (07545 083 507, <http://www.eastvillagelondon.co.uk/shop-eat/hand>).

Signorelli 7 Victory Parade, East Village, London E20 1FS (020 8534 4972, <http://signorelli.co.uk/>).

Tina We Salute You 2 Olympic Park Avenue, East Village, London E20 1FT (07424 585 449, <http://tinawesaluteyou.com/>).

Timber Lodge Café 1A Honour Lea Avenue, Olympic Park, London E20 1DY (020 7241 9076, <https://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/the-park/things-to-do/food-and-drink/timber-lodge-cafe>).

Café 42 Degrees Abercrombie Road, Olympic Park, London E20 3AB.

Barge East Sweetwater Trade Mooring, River Lee Navigation, White Post Lane, Hackney Wick, London E9 5EN (020 3026 2807, <https://www.bargeeast.com/>).

The Milk Float Sweetwater Trade Mooring, River Lee Navigation, White Post Lane, Hackney Wick, London E9 5EN (<http://themilkfloat.com/>).

Hackney Bridge Kitchen Hackney Bridge, Units 1-28, ECHO BUILDING, East Bay Lane, London, E15 2SJ (<https://hackneybridge.org/food-drink/>).

Number 90 Bar & Kitchen/La Terraza, 90 Main Yard, Wallis Road, London E9 5LN (020 8986 0090, <http://number90bar.co.uk/>).

Grow 98c Main Yard, Wallis Road, London E9 5LN (020 8510 1757, <https://www.growhackney.co.uk/>).

Beer Merchants Tap 99 Wallis Road, London E9 5LN (020 3222 5592, <https://beermerchantstap.com/>).

Slice Club Pizza 7 Prince Edward Road, London E9 5LX (07546 853 165, <https://www.sliceclub.hungrrr.co.uk/>).

Cornerstone Hackney 3 Prince Edward Road, London E9 5LX (020 8986 3922, <https://cornerstonehackney.com/>).

Lord Napier Star 25 White Post Lane, London E9 5ER (020 8161 4338, <https://lordnapierstar.co.uk/>).

HWK Coffee & Bar White Post Lane, London E9 (07700 168 030, <https://www.hwklondon.com/>).

Old Street Brewery & Taproom Unit 1, Queens Yard, White Post Lane, London E9 5EN (020 825 9731, <https://www.oldstreetbrewery.com/>).

The Wicked Fish Queens Yard, White Post Lane, London E9 5EN (07917 239 470, <https://thewickedfish.co.uk/>).

Colour Factory Unit 8, Queens Yard, White Post Lane, London E9 5EN (07917 239 470, <https://www.colourfactory.com/>).

Howling Hops Brewery and Tank Bar & Kitchen Unit 9, Queens Yard, White Post Lane, London E9 5EN (020 3583 8262, <http://www.howlinghops.co.uk/>).

Crate Brewery & Pizzeria Unit 7, The White Building, Queens Yard, Hackney Wick, London E9 5EN (020 8533 3331, <https://www.cratebrewery.com/>).

All My Friends Unit 1, 96 White Post Lane, Hackney Wick, London E9 5EN (07517 456 418, <https://www.allmyfriends.uk/>).

White Post Café Schwartz Wharf (Building 4), 92 White Post Lane, Hackney Wick, London E9 5EN (020 8533 0633, <http://whitepost-london.com/>).

Lanterna 6 Wyke Road, Fish Island, London E3 2XD (020 8075 9888, <https://lanternafishisland.com/>).

Two More Years 7 Roach Road, Fish Island, London E3 2PA (020 7183 0089, <https://twomoreyears.co.uk/>).

Forman's Smokehouse, Bar and Restaurant Stour Road, Fish Island, London E3 2NT (020 8525 2365, <http://www.formans.co.uk/restaurant/>).

The View Tube Café The Greenway, Marshgate Lane, London E15 2PJ (<https://theviewtube.co.uk/>).

The Last Drop (The Podium Bar & Kitchen) 5 Thornton Street, Olympic Park, London E20 2AD (020 8221 9113).

Notes

Stratford City/International Quarter South & North

Stratford City is the name given to the urban community centred on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. It is a mixed-use development, and the main developers are the Westfield Group and Lend Lease.

Based on Stratford Regional and Stratford International railway stations, it includes "The International Quarter", a joint venture between Lend Lease and London and Continental Railways (LCR) to create a £2 billion commercial and residential development, the Westfield shopping centre, Chobham Academy, and the East Village, previously the athletes' village constructed by Lend Lease for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The site was proposed to be secured under a compulsory purchase order (CPO) by the London Development Agency, and mainly consisted of former Railway Works and Depots, formerly contaminated waste land and industrial buildings, but also two Travellers' sites. In late 2005, a row broke out between then Mayor of London Ken Livingstone and Newham Council/Westfield over the use of the legal instrument. The site for the Olympic Village was to be located next to the £4 billion development of Stratford City, but access difficulties meant that the Olympic Park CPO extended onto the site for Stratford City. In November 2005, an agreement was made whereby the CPO over the Westfield site was removed, subject to agreed access provisions to the Olympic Village. Work started in early 2007, and the entire project was completed in 2012.

Olympic Park

The park occupies an area straddling four east London boroughs; Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Waltham Forest, covering parts of Stratford, Bow, Leyton, and Hackney Wick. The site was previously a mixture of green- and brownfield land, including parts of Hackney Marshes. 52 electricity pylons, up to 65 metres high, that dominated the landscape in and around the park were removed and the power transferred through new underground tunnels, and the soil across the Park site was cleaned down to a human health layer, by soil washing. Following a post-Olympics closure for extensive remodelling, a part of the park re-opened in July 2013, with a large majority of the rest (including the Aquatics Centre, Velopark and Orbit observation tower) re-opening in April 2014.

The landscape planning includes the opening up of the River Lea in the northern section of the park, the habitat-creation strategy and the park's excellent links with its hinterland. It is one of the largest urban parks created in Western Europe for more than 150 years, designed to enrich and preserve the local environment, by restoring wetland habitats and planting native species of plants.

The landscape design has been criticised in places though, for being dominated by vast pedestrian concourses which are busy during events but underused on other occasion, while the garden-type planting has mostly not been used to make "gardens", but rather just strips of planting beside the wide concourses. Five new neighbourhoods of housing and amenities have been/are being built, mostly in Newham borough: Chobham Manor, East Wick (Hackney), Sweetwater (Tower Hamlets), Pudding Mill and Marshgate Wharf.

ArcelorMittal Orbit

The ArcelorMittal Orbit (often referred to as the Orbit Tower or simply just the Orbit) is a 114.5m-tall (376ft) sculpture and observation tower in the Olympic Park and Britain's largest piece of public art. It allows visitors to view the whole Olympic Park from two observation platforms. Orbit was designed by Turner-Prize winning artist Sir Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond of engineering Group Arup.

Orbit represented a radical advance in the architectural field of combining sculpture and structural engineering, and combines both stability and instability in a work that visitors can engage with and experience via an incorporated spiral walkway and later also the world's tallest and longest (178 metres) tunnel slide, designed by German/Belgian artist Carsten Höller. It has been both praised and criticised for its bold design, and has especially received criticism as a vanity project of questionable lasting use or merit as a public art project. In October 2012, the ArcelorMittal Orbit was nominated and made the shortlist for the Carbuncle Cup - an award for the worst British building completed in the past year, but despite this and many other criticisms, it has been included in the 2015 re-design of the British passport.

Aquatics Centre

The centre was designed by Zaha Hadid in 2004 before London won the bid for the 2012 Summer Olympics. Because of this, the spectator wings were not part of the original design. They were later added to fit the estimated audience (17,500). The two temporary "wings" have been removed following the Games, reducing the capacity to a regular 2,800 with an additional 1,000 seats available for major events.

Manhattan Loft Gardens

Manhattan Loft Corporation's 42-storey east London residential tower (with a hotel filling the lower seven storeys) follows former landmark projects St. Pancras Renaissance Hotel and Chiltern Firehouse. MLC was founded in 1992 by Munich-born Harry Handelsman, who also sits on the boards of the South London Gallery, the Southbank Centre and of Artangel. The Stratford site was offered to MLC in 2009 by London and Continental Railways, before the Westfield Shopping Centre was taking shape.

<http://www.manhattanloft.co.uk/projects/manhattan-loft-gardens-luxury-apartments/>

The Lea River

The River Lea (or Lee) originates in Marsh Farm, Leagrave, Luton in the Chiltern Hills and flows for 68km, generally southeast, east, and then south, through Harpenden, Welwyn Garden City, Hertford, Broxbourne, Cheshunt, Tottenham and Stratford to London where it meets the River Thames (as Bow Creek). The river once formed one boundary of the Danelaw and also was the traditional boundary between the counties of Middlesex and Essex, and part of the boundary between Essex and Hertfordshire. The spelling Lea predominates west (upstream) of Hertford, but both spellings are used from Hertford to the Thames. The source of the river is known as the 'Five-Springs' and lies in the north-west corner of Waulud's Bank, a Neolithic enclosure. According to legend, the Celtic god 'Lug' or 'Lud' or 'Lyg', presided over the springs. 'Lug' is the Celtic god of light, and the name 'Lea' may derive from this name. The town now known as Luton is named after this river which therefore may mean 'the settlement on the river of the god Lugus' ('-ton' being Anglo-Saxon for 'large settlement').

Hackney Wick

Prior to 'modern times', Hackney Wick was an area prone to periodic flooding, as the tidal estuary of The Lea stretched all the way to Hackney Wick. Only the construction of the canals and relief channels known as Bow Backwaters alleviated that and allowed the development of the area. In historic times, the marshes were used extensively for grazing cattle, and there was limited occupation around the 'great house' at Hackney Wick: Wick Hall. Due to its vicinity to efficient waterways and (later also) railways, during the 19th and (early) 20th centuries, the Wick was a thriving well-populated but poor industrial zone, with only a few areas of lessened deprivation amid the noxious fumes and noise: the world's first true synthetic plastic,

parkesine, was manufactured here, as was shellac; the Wick was the location of the oil distiller Carless, Capel & Leonard, credited with introducing the term petrol in the 1890s; a vast array of dyestuffs were invented and manufactured by Hackney Wick based engineers or firms, and dry cleaning was introduced to Britain from here, as was the humble toilet paper.

The conditions created by these types of businesses hastened the involvement of Eton College to instigate their urban mission in Hackney Wick, a philanthropic and perhaps more accurately pedagogical outreach shared with several other 'public' schools.

In post-industrial times, part of the Wick was redeveloped in the 1960s to create the GLC's Trowbridge Estate, much of which was already replaced between 1985 and 1996 though.

Hackney Wick has long been home to a large number of professional creatives, artists and musicians.

Attracted in part by the low-cost studio spaces that became available with the decline of its industrial past, more than 600 individual artist studios existed in 2013, with notable artists including Banksy, Paul Noble and Fantich & Young. The area has also a number of established creative arts venues with the Schwartz Gallery, Stour Space, The Yard micro theatre, and artists' collectives such as the Performance Space, and the White Building, London's centre for art, technology and sustainability. In fact, the former industrial area had become home to the highest concentration of artists' studios in Europe.

Following the Olympics, Hackney Wick has seen the onset of rapid gentrification in part due to the new residential locations within the Olympic legacy site.

Lea Valley Walk

A linear waymarked Long-Distance Path of 80 km (50 mi) located between Leagrave, the source of the River Lea near Luton, and the Thames, at Limehouse Basin, London. At Hertford the path follows the towpath of the River Lee Navigation.

The White Building

A community arts venue in Hackney Wick commissioned by the London Legacy Development Corporation as part of the 'Olympic Fringe', a string of small-scale projects aimed at stitching the Olympic Park into the surrounding city fabric. It is located in a disused print works, refurbished to provide artists' studio spaces, a group studio, a hire space with views of the Olympic Park and a brewery. The White Building now provides one of the few public faces to the established artistic community in the area, focusing on innovation and creative practice at the intersection of art, technology and sustainability.

The Yard Theatre

...is a multi-award-winning theatre venue in a converted dormant warehouse in Queen's Yard, split into two sections – one housing the theatre, and the other the bar – and made with recycled and reclaimed material.

Fish Island

Fish Island is located south of the Hertford Union canal where it joins the Hackney Cut and is so called for some of its streets named after freshwater fish: Dace Road, Roach Road and Bream Street. In 1865 the Imperial Gas Light and Coke Company bought 30 acres of land as the site for a new works, but instead decided to build these on the east bank of the Lea in Bromley-by-Bow. The company sold the site and the present network of streets was laid out, and filled with small houses and multi-storey factories. Until the late 1990s the island's largest employer was Percy Dalton's Famous Peanut Company, at the Old Ford Works in Dace Road. There were also rubber works, waterproofing businesses, printers, timber yards and a piano factory. Fish Island was until recently dominated by waste disposal and recycling facilities and wholesale and distribution warehouses, together with some offices.

After a number of vacant properties fell into disrepair the council permitted their conversion to live/work loft apartments – and in 2005 the construction of the Roach Point pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Hertford Union canal halved the length of the journey from Fish Island to Hackney Wick station.

As in Hackney Wick, the affordability of disused industrial premises has attracted a thriving community of artists and designers to Fish Island. A notable example on Roach Road is Stour Space, an exhibition, performance and studio space for the development of creative enterprises.

Carpenter's Road Lock

Carpenter's Road Lock is a rising radial lock and the only one in the UK with two radial gates rising high above the boat as it passes through. It was used both for flood control and for navigation and is located on the Bow Back Rivers (a 16 km system of waterways between the River Lea and the River Thames, 6 km of which are located in the Olympic Park) and was constructed in 1933/34. It has undergone a lengthy refurbishment and was brought back into use in late 2017.

Northern Outfall Sewer/The Greenway

The Northern Outfall Sewer (NOS) is a gravity sewer which runs from Wick Lane in Hackney to Beckton sewage treatment works; most of it was designed by Joseph Bazalgette after an outbreak of cholera in 1853 and the "Great Stink" of 1858. London's sewerage system relies on intercepting sewers north and south of the Thames. In the north, five interceptor sewers were constructed to feed into the NOS: from Hampstead, Kilburn, Kensal Green, Ravenscourt Park and Hammersmith. The embankment containing the NOS carries The Greenway, a footpath/cycleway, known locally as "Sewerbank" before a full renovation in the mid 90's.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Follow signs for the **Town Centre Exit** (i.e.: **NOT** the exit for Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and Westfield Stratford City). This is the exit close to the Jubilee Line and DLR platforms. Once through the barriers *veer right* towards '**Robert**', a heritage locomotive displayed on the station forecourt. **This is an ideal meeting point for groups.** With the station in your back, *turn left* along the station forecourt and in 50m *turn left* up a flight of stairs. You pass the upper level station exit and ascend another flight of stairs to continue along a very wide pedestrian bridge across the railway tracks.

[!] **Immediately on your left**, by the exit of some lifts, glass railings give the opportunity of first impressions of the various phases of development in the area: across the convoluted rail station lie the **Stratford City** retail and **International Quarter South** commercial developments, beyond which is located the **Olympic Park**, with some of its landmark buildings: the **ArcelorMittal Orbit** ("the Tower") which was runner-up in the 2012 Carbuncle Cup, an award for the worst British building completed in the past year; the former Olympic, now **London Stadium** ("the Stadium") and the multi-award winning **Aquatics Centre** ("the Pool").

*The **International Quarter** forms the boundary of **Stratford City** (the pre-Olympics development, a joint venture at the time between Lend Lease and London & Continental Railways, the company behind HS1) and the **Olympic Park**. The original developers (**Chelsfield**) planned a mixed integrated residential development, but lost interest/lacked financing: then **Westfield** came in and changed the slant to retail.*

Continue across the footbridge towards the **Westfield Shopping Centre** and in 180m on the other side *veer left* along **The Street**, a part-covered pedestrianised shopping street, ignoring the right fork through some doors into the covered part of the centre. In 30m on the left notice the Tower on view at the end of a side 'street' of the shopping centre. In 160m *bear right* with The Street, ignoring a broad left-turning pedestrianised lane lined by some chain restaurants; this was the main approach route to the Olympic Park during the 2012 Games, now with the **International Quarter South** commercial high rises at its end. In 100m on a plaza called **Four Dials** **[!]** *bear right* towards the shopping centre's enclosed part, ignoring a left-turn and a minor path ahead. In 50m you walk through some doors and back out through more doors in another 25m and continue in the same direction on the other side – in 15m down a flight of stairs – and then to the right of, or through, **Stratford International Mainline Station**.

LCR had to build the station, but its trains are not obliged to stop; the original intention was for this to be the London (Parkway) stop for HS trains from the Midlands and the North on their way to the Continent, but it is now largely a station without function, with only Southeastern's domestic high speed services from St. Pancras International to East Kent stopping here.

On the right you have **Manhattan Loft Gardens**, a new high-rise residential and hotel development by Manhattan Loft Corporation. In 150m you cross a road at some lights and continue in the same direction to the right of the **Stratford International DLR Station**. *You have now left the **Stratford City** development area, which preceded the idea of hosting Olympic Games in London by some years. Prior to the Olympic development there had been some commune/co-operative housing and HV electricity pylons here (the line now runs underground).* In 70m ignore a left-turning tarmac path towards **East Village** (the 2012 Athletes' Village) and continue in the same direction along the road pavement. In another 70m *turn left* to cross a shared cycle- and footpath, away from the road, and into **Victory Park**.

You follow a tarmac footpath to the left of the **International Quarter North** commercial development (a mixture of hotels, office blocks and housing), and pass by a fenced-in clump of trees and some beehives on your left and in 40m more continue in the same direction at a four-way junction by a sculpture of a gorilla on the grass on the right and **Mirror Labyrinth** on the left, an art work by **Jeppe Hein**, consisting of an assembly of slim tall mirrored steel lamellae. The path curves gently to the right and in 60m joins a broad paved path by some residential towers on the left. You continue through the former athlete's village and in 40m *turn left* by a '**Portlands**' sign on the left, to continue along a narrow tarmac path through a raised grassy area with a pond on the right. This is part of a **water filtration and reclamation** project.

[On this stretch in the buildings on the right-hand side you find the following independent cafés and bistros: In 30m **Ginger & Mint**, in 30m **Hand** in 60m **Signorelli**, and in another 60m **Tina We Salute You**.]

In 40m you continue in the same direction at a four-way junction, now with a pond on the left, and in 50m continue in the same direction at another four-way junction, now with another pond on the right. In 100m cross **Olympic Park Avenue** at a pedestrian crossing and continue in the same direction through some bollards and along a wide gravel path. Pass an info panel on this, the **Waterglades**, area on the right and in 20m ignore a couple of right-turning paths to continue in the same direction, gently descending. On the left you have some water channels and in 50m a small pond (also part of the water filtration project), while there are some glades on the right. On the other side of the pond, you have a metal bar fence around the High-Speed railway cutting, and the Tower and the Stadium beyond it. In another 70m *turn right* at a T-junction, now with the **Channelsea** inlet on your left. In 80m *turn left* at a four-way junction of paths, with a short flight of stairs ahead of you.

The tarmac path curves to the left and in 130m you pass an info panel on this area (**Wet Woodland**). In 30m *fork right*, ignoring the left fork towards a bridge to in 15m walk between the two parts of another artwork, a sliced red phone booth, before joining a path along **The River Lea** (Dane's Walk), in 40m passing a wooden pontoon on the left and a bench on the right. Continue under **Eastcross** twin footbridges, and on the other side in 20m you can spot the **Olympic Rings** on a hillock ahead. In 70m you continue with some wooden terracing on the right (ignore a path turning hard right towards some steps up to the higher level) and some reed beds on the left. In 50m by the end of the wooden terracing, **[!]** *fork right* away from the river past an info panel on the **Wetland Bowl** and in 30m - at a bend of the path - *turn right* up a flight of stairs to a higher-level tarmac path. *Turn left* with the tarmac path, soon curving right with it, and in 60m, by the **Timber Lodge Café**, *turn hard left* on a dog leg along a wider tarmac path (Essex Way).

You continue to the left of the **Tumbling Bay** activity playground (initially hidden by foliage) towards the **Lee Valley VeloPark**, the former Olympic Velodrome. In 60m you pass the **Cross and Cave** sculpture by **Heather and Ivan Morison** on the left, and in 110m go through a usually open metal gate and in 40m *turn right* towards the VeloPark, with **Chobham Manor** residential development on the right. In 125m ignore the entrance to the VeloPark (toilets and the **Café 42 Degrees** can be found on the first floor) to continue along the velodrome and in 25m *turn left* up a flight of stairs to *turn right* at the upper level, following a wide path around the perimeter of the velodrome. The windows on the left offer glimpses of the action inside the velodrome while in about 50m you have the tarmac **road bike track** on the right behind some railings, with the **BMX track** behind it (a **mountain bike trail** is located behind the BMX track, but not visible from here).

As you curve to the left around the velodrome, the **A12** comes into ear- and eyeshot, beyond which lie the **Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre**. The road bike track eventually runs parallel to your right and in 50m, by a set of stairs down to the right and a starter house below on the right, notice the **LFO Spectrum** artwork ahead, by **Carsten Nicolai**. *It is the colours of the Olympic Rings converted into an image of a low-frequency oscillation sound wave, digitally printed onto an upper level security fence around a park ranger yard.* With the top of the **BT Tower** in the West End visible ahead, ignore the set of stairs to the lower level, **[!]** but *fork right* down a curving path leading in 60m to a wider path, which to the right crosses the A12 towards **Eton Manor**, once known as '**The Wilderness**'. *Turn left* along this path (i.e. more or less continue in the same direction), with the velodrome initially on your left. In 50m, immediately after a couple of wide right forking paths leading towards the fence around the road bike track, and about 30m before reaching a four-way junction of paths, *fork right* along a tarmac path, in the direction of the **Olympic Rings** (can be hidden by foliage).

In 55m you walk through a usually open metal gate and curve right with the fence on the right, but in 50m **[!]** continue in the same direction away from the right curving fence towards a wide bridge. In 30m ignore some steps down to **The River Lea** and cross the river on **Knight's Bridge**. On the left you get views of the Stadium and Tower and of **Canary Wharf's** higher buildings. At the far end of the bridge *turn left and left again* back on yourself down some stairs to the riverside concrete path and at the bottom of the stairs *turn right* along it, with the river on your left. You ignore three paths forking up right through the grassy meadow and pass a couple of areas with wooden terracing to go under **a set of footpath bridges** in 220m and in another 170m go under a **road bridge**. On the other side of the bridge *turn right* with the path up a flight of stairs to the higher-level main path through **the southern part** of the Park.

*This is a more built-up area than the northern part of the Park: across the path you have the **King's Yard Power Station**, and a little to the right the **Copper Box Arena**, the former Olympic Handball venue still in service for sports – community based and professional, with **Monica Bonvicini's RUN** sculpture in front of it (can be hidden by foliage) and **Here East** to the right of it. Here East, the **2012 Press and Broadcast Centre**, is now host to an assortment of media, digital and sports-related companies and institutions, from start-up, entrepreneurial businesses to global, established ones.*

Turn left along this wide path (to the left of a new cycle-path and road), keeping just to the left of the cycle-path and heading towards the Stadium, with the new residential buildings and converted warehouses of **Hackney Wick** visible away to the right, home of independent coffee shops, delis and microbreweries [*with the 'Sweetwater' building site inbetween*], to cross a couple of bridges: first across the **Overground** railway tracks, and then a road. Continue in the same direction towards **Mandeville Place**, with its small **Community Orchard** and to a couple of footbridges across The River Lea or to the Stadium beyond it.

*The Stadium was planned to be dismantled after the Games, but continued Athletics capability was a condition for the awarding of the Games, and as no potential tenant (i.e.: a football club) would have wanted a running track, extensive rebuilding and a subsidised rental deal were needed to ensure a tenant: **West Ham United FC**.*

[!] **Do not cross any of the bridges**, but go down some steps, to the right of the stainless-steel **Diamond Bridge** and to the left of **Stadium Bridge 2**, down to **The Old River Lee**. *Turn right* along the river and in 35m continue along a two-railed wooden bridge to pass under **Stadium Bridge 2**. In 50m continue along tarmac and in 80m by some steps on the right, you enter the **Great British Garden**. In 100m leave the garden up some steps to the right and *turn left* along a wide tarmac path. In 30m by **Stadium Bridge 3** on the left, you *turn right* across a road and continue between two

fenced parts of the **Bobby Moore Academy Sports Centre** towards a pedestrian bridge over **The Lee Navigation (the Hackney Cut)**. In 30m ignore the main path across the bridge towards a tall brick chimney to *fork right* and in 40m go down some steps to the waterside path along the Hackney Cut. **Note:** this is a **busy shared cycle-/footpath**, and part of the **Capital Ring** and the **Lee Valley Walk**. *Turn right* along the Navigation, with the water on your left-hand side.

The Lee Navigation was built to enable barge transport, when the majority interest still wanted the Lee River itself used for powering mills. Some of the buildings on the Hackney Wick side preceded the plans for the 2012 Olympics, i.e.: it was speculative 'riverside' residential buildings when the river was even more polluted than now and the view was of a vast industrial estate. [The water here is very dirty as most fresh and clean water coming down The Lee from Hertfordshire joins reservoirs further upstream for London's water supply, and between the reservoirs and here the navigation gets mostly road runoff as additional supply.]

In 40m you go over a disused ramp, *the former site of a travelling crane, used to unload timber barges*, with the café of the **Stour Space** site opposite and in 100m pass under a new road bridge. In 120m the **Hertford Union Canal** joins from the left from the Regent's Canal and past Victoria Park (the higher buildings in the City of London are visible along it) and in 30m you pass a couple of bars/café's on barges: **Barge East** and **The Milk Float**. In another 60m you go under a road bridge (**White Post Lane**) and pass the Power Station seen earlier on your right (on the site of the former **Clarnico Works**, a confectionery producer). You have **The White Building** on the other side of the water (with the **Crate Bar and Pizzeria** occupying the lower floor) and in 50m go under a railway bridge (Overground and freight trains). You pass the outdoor seating area of **Hackney Bridge Kitchen** up on the right with the **Copper Box Arena** beyond it and several restaurants and bars on the left across the water, accessible from the road walked along soon. In 120m go under another (foot-) bridge.

With **Mossbourne Riverside Academy** school and **Here East** ahead (and with several more independent cafés, restaurants and bars some 300m ahead in the 'Canalside' retail annex of Here East), **[!]** *turn right* immediately on the other side of the bridge to walk up some steps and in 50m *turn right and right again* back on yourself to cross **Wallis Bridge** over the Lee Navigation into **Hackney Wick**. On the other side descend some stairs and continue along **Wallis Road**, soon passing the yard on the left that leads to the waterside restaurants seen a little earlier (**Number 90 Bar & Kitchen/La Terraza** and **Grow**) and then the **Hackney Wick Boulder Project** on the right. In 80m a passage on the left leads to **Hackney Wick Overground Station** (the other side of the station will be passed in a few minutes) as you pass the **Beer Merchants Tap** on the right and then the restored **Wallis Road Courtyard** with its brown plaque commemorating the 'First Plastic in the World'.

In 50m *turn left* with Wallis Road, where **Berkshire Road** joins from the right (and with **Slice Club Pizza** ahead in **Oslo House**, a converted clothing factory, and **Cornerstone Hackney** restaurant to its left), and pass **Station Food & Wine** store on the right, just before the **Lion Works** building on the right hand side (*built as an Iron Foundry in late 19th century, it is one of the oldest buildings in the Hackney Wick/Fish Island conservation area, now housing a range of artists' studios as well as Liquid Studios*). You then go under the railway line and beyond the railway bridge have **The Lord Napier** pub on the left (*closed down in 1995 and fully covered by 'street art' since 2016 but reopened in 2021; formerly notable for its gable height graffiti commenting on the intense gentrification of the area: 'Shithouse to Penthouse'*) and the **Hope Chemical Works** walls on the right (*at one point the main crude petroleum distillery in the land*) and enter the heart of the recent regeneration/gentrification project in the area.

Turn left along **White Post Lane**, signposted 'The Yard Theatre, River Lee Navigation, Hertford Union Canal & Old Ford Lock', in 30m pass **HWK Coffee & Bar** and in 50m **Hackney Wick Overground Station** (trains to Stratford or Clapham Junction and Richmond via Highbury & Islington), with **Queen's Yard** ahead (also formerly **Clarnico** confectionery production), and *turn right* with **White Post Lane**. In 50m *turn left* at a T-junction (still White Post Lane). In 30m pass the entrance to another yard (with the **Schwartz Gallery** and the **White Post Café**) and a bus stop on the right and in 20m the other entrance to Queen's Yard on the left (with the **Old Street Brewery & Taproom**, **The Yard Theatre**, **The Wicked Fish**, **Colour Factory**, **Howling Hops Brewery and Tank Bar & Kitchen** and the **Crate Brewery & Pizzeria**). Continue along the road, passing a courtyard on the right with **All My Friends** in it.

[!] *Just before the bridge* over the Lee Navigation, *turn right* along a narrow tarmac path along the water and in 30m go through some bike barriers, with the Stadium and the Tower visible across the water. In 50m the path turns right where the **Hertford Union Canal** joins the Lee Navigation, and in 60m you pass the waterside entrance to the **White Post Café** on the right. In 10m *fork right* up a gently ascending ramp to the Roach Point pedestrian and cycle bridge over the canal and *turn left* onto **Fish Island**, famous now for artists' studios and independent galleries, but who are under high pressure from regeneration/gentrification. On the other side of the bridge continue in the same direction along a road pavement with **Carpenters Wharf**, a residential development, and then **Omega Works**, on your left-hand side and the new residential quarter **Fish Island Village** on your right, including **Lanterna** pizzeria, bar & deli.

In 40m ignore **Wyke Road** to the right and in 50m reach a four-way road junction, where **Monier Road** joins from the right and by the **MK Carlton Chimney** on the site of the former **Carlton Shoes** factory and a new road bridge over the Hackney Navigation on the left. Continue in the same direction and in 40m pass the entrance to **Stour Space**, a gallery, studio and performance space with its **Two More Years** all-day bar and *bear right* with the road. In 35m *turn left* along a minor road and in 40m you reach the new site of **Forman's Smokehouse, Bar and Restaurant** (currently closed), one of the many businesses forced to relocate from its former place in what is now the Olympic Park (just before **The Old Peanut Factory**). *Turn left* this side of Forman's up some steps and through a small landscaped area and in 50m cross a footbridge over the Hackney Cut. On the other side *turn left* in 15m go down some steps *and left again* back on yourself to then *turn left* along the waterfront path under the bridge just crossed in a southerly direction and continue with the water on your right (this is again the **busy shared cycle- and footpath** walked along earlier), with the **Bobby Moore Academy** on your left. In 150m you pass **Old Ford Lock** with **Swan Wharf** on the other side and continue across a footbridge over **The River Lea**.

On the other side you have a choice:

For an extension along The Greenway and past the ArcelorMittal Orbit, *turn right* down a ramp to follow the path beside the Lee Navigation and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Extension**.

For the main walk, *turn left* down some steps and along the path beside the **Old River Lea** towards the Stadium visible ahead. In 80m ignore a right turn, signposted 'Pudding Mill Lane Station/Greenway', and go under a road bridge, signposted 'Stadium', still with The Lee on your left. In 30m walk through a fence gap and in 150m go under Stadium Bridge 3 and then through a metal gate and ignore a right forking tarmac path, up to the stadium concourse. In 200m go under Stadium Bridge 2 and in 50m reach the confluence of **The Old River Lee** with the City Mill River at a humped metal railed footbridge, and with the stainless steel-clad **Diamond Bridge** and the **Carpenters**

Road Lock ahead. Cross the humped steel bridge and – with a climbing wall away to the right – *turn left* to go under the first of two arms of the Diamond Bridge.

***)** In 50m – by an info panel on the Carpenters Road Lock – *turn right* up some steps. At the top of the steps *turn left* and in 20m *turn right* to continue through the following landscaped area (**Stratford Marsh**) with the **City Mill River** on the right and the **Waterworks River** on the left. The Stadium looms large on the right, the Tower rises straight ahead and the **East Bank** development dominates the left-hand vista.

*This 'Education and Culture District' has a **V&A East**, the **London College of Fashion** (part of the University of the Arts), some **BBC Music Studios** and a **Sadler's Wells East** dance theatre.*

As you continue past a couple of café kiosks, any route through this stretch is a good one, as themed plantings drop down to the rivers on the left and right. In 100m you pass an info panel for the **Asia Garden** on the left and ignore **Tallow Bridge** turning left towards some boats moored opposite for canal cruises [leeandstortboats.co.uk]. In another 170m, just after an info panel on the **Southern Hemisphere Garden**, *turn left* across the main bridge over the Waterworks River towards the Pool on the other side of it. The **International Quarter South** and **East Bank** loom large on the opposite side, and **Westfield Shopping Centre** fills the space behind it. *[In the water on the left and right, a long row of 35 coloured posts is an artwork: **Steles** by **Keith Wilson**, but also used as mooring posts.]*

On the other side of the bridge **[!]** *turn right* by a lift on the right and continue *to the right* of the **Aquatics Centre**, while ignoring some steps down (to the main entrance of the public pool). The path *passes through an area that was occupied by the temporary stands during the 2012 Games*, and in 100m descends a flight of stairs with a vertical green wall on the left and at the bottom of the stairs you *curve left* with the path around the Aquatics Centre. In 40m you walk up another flight of stairs curving left to regain the upper level perimeter path. You get views of the '**Since 9/11 – the WTC**' sculpture on an earth mound to the right and in 100m from the top of the stairs *turn right* along the main route between the Olympic Park and Stratford city, crossing a bridge over first a road and then some railway tracks (DLR, Overground and Mainline).

In 100m from the end of the bridge you follow the broad path through part of the **International Quarter South** and in 120m cross a road at some lights. *On view on the left is the building that has dominated the view at various points of the route: '**Unite Stratford City**', which made the 2014 shortlist for the **Carbuncle Cup**, an award for the worst British building completed in the past year; it is now Student accommodation.* Continue in the same direction between food outlets and in 90m reach **The Street** and *turn right* along it (or indeed through the covered part of the shopping centre), to reach the bridge over the railway tracks in 200m. For the shortest route into **Stratford Station** *fork left* here – *before the bridge* – to go down a flight of stairs and *turn right* at the bottom to the street level station entrance.

Extension

(adds 800m)

In 80m you walk under a bridge carrying the **Northern Outfall Sewer**, designed in 1858 by Bazalgette (and with it **The Greenway**), and immediately on the other side of it *turn left* at a three-way signpost with **The Capital Ring**, direction 'Beckton District Park/Woolwich Foot Tunnel/Crystal Palace Park'. A narrow tarmac path leads up to the wider Greenway and you continue in the same direction for 400m, where – with the **The View Tube Café** ahead – you ignore the Capital Ring forking down right.

[!] *Fork left* down a tarmac path towards a road below and in 70m continue in the same direction along the road to cross **The City Mill River** on the road bridge. On the other side of the bridge *turn left* across a large open space (**Stratford Marsh**) towards the Tower 250m away. Head towards the right of the Tower and ignore a bridge over **The Waterworks River** on the right to continue along a tarmac path past **The Podium Bar & Kitchen** in **The Podium** (the Visitor Centre) and the following **Pixel Wall** artwork on the left, created by **Tomato**, a London based design collective. Pick any path you like through this planted up area (the **2012 Gardens**), with the Pool across the water on the right, and in about 200m ignore the bridge on the right leading to the Pool.

Veer left in the following section (the **Pleasure Gardens**) and follow a path forking down on the left to the waterside path along **The City Mill River**, with the Stadium to your left across the water. Continue in the same direction along this path with the water on your left, soon passing a climbing wall. At the confluence with **The Old River Lee**, by the stainless steel-clad **Diamond Bridge** and the **Carpenters Road Lock** on the right, and a humped metal railed footbridge over the City Mill River on the left, the Main Walk joins from the left over the humped bridge. *Turn right* along The Old River Lee to go under the first of two arms of the Diamond Bridge and pick up the main walk directions at the asterisk above *).